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SUBJECT: Abuja By-Election Results - ANPP Concedes
Defeat

Ref: Abuja 2183

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1. After the by-election for the only Abuja Senate seat conducted on December 20, PDP Senator Isa Maina retained his seat with an overall victory margin of 1,416 votes (less than one percent of the total). Maina's original victory margin in April over ANPP candidate Irete Kingibe was 1,208 votes. Kingibe conceded, lamenting the low voter turnout; only about 20 percent of the potential 20,000 voters came out. Kingibe had protested the original election in April, arguing successfully before an election tribunal that results from 23 polling stations had not been counted. Maina was sworn in as Senator in May and maintained the seat until told to vacate by Senate PDP leadership on December 10 in order to prepare for the election.

2. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) conducted the election using its own staff instead of ad hoc personnel like those hired during the April/May elections. There was no reported violence, mainly due to the massive security presence (Embassy observers counted 10 to 20 security agents at every polling station). Security agents made as many as a dozen arrests (mostly for possession of multiple voter cards), and impounded one bus that allegedly was transporting persons from another district into the voting district to vote illegally.

3. COMMENT: INEC's performance in this by-election was a significant improvement over previous elections. The Commission was helped by the small number of polling stations, extremely low voter turnout and massive security presence. The level of voter apathy demonstrates that many Nigerians have given up on the current process of fixing the April/May elections. End Comment.

MEECE